

The Otepka Case

The story of Oct. 2, discussing the contents of the final volume of the hearings on the Otepka case released by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, contains a number of misstatements, distortions and omissions.

You say that "secret" loyalty reports on ten prominent Americans, which I gave to the Subcommittee, were made public by the Subcommittee.

The facts are that the one document relating to the ten individuals, which I gave to the Subcommittee, was not secret nor was it a loyalty report. It was a memorandum which I myself had classified as "confidential" and which merely called attention to matters of record which, in my opinion, required that normal security procedures be followed before some of these individuals were cleared. My memorandum contained only the substance of unresolved allegations found in unclassified publications. Such allegations required firm resolution under the Department's security standards and principles prior to the entrance on duty of the individuals involved. Because there was no available information on one prospective appointee it was my recommendation that the results of a pending check be obtained before any clearance was granted. My memorandum

brought all of these matters to the attention of my immediate superior, John F. Reilly, and recommended that waivers of investigation not be granted. In making this recommendation I was conforming to the policy of my superiors that waivers would be granted with reluctance in the absence of a genuine emergency and ample justification.

You say that I gave the "reports to the subcommittee to demonstrate 'laxity' in the Department's security operation." The fact is that I gave my memorandum to the Subcommittee after my immediate superior, Mr. Reilly, to whom my memorandum was addressed, had testified that the case of only one prospective employee had been brought to his attention prior to their appointment. This testimony I knew to be incorrect and my memorandum proved that it was incorrect.

You say that my production of the "reports" was "in violation of a Presidential Order issued by Harry S. Truman in 1952." Whether I violated the Presidential Order or not is an issue which will be resolved in my forthcoming hearing or in subsequent proceedings in court. It is surprising that you have prejudged the matter, finding me guilty before trial.

You say that I "produced no evidence of disloyalty on the part of any of the men involved." The fact is that I did not charge any of the men involved with disloyalty, but merely cited matters of record which, under State Department regulations, required further investigation and resolution.

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You say that I have been complaining to the Subcommittee for five years about State Department security practices, resulting in 20 volumes of testimony dealing with my frustrations and disagreements with superiors. The impression you apparently are attempting to create is that I was a disgruntled employee, a chronic malcontent who was using the Subcommittee to vent his spleen on his superiors. The fact is that I appeared before the Subcommittee, as did many other State Department employees, as a witness called by the Subcommittee. I testified on a number of occasions, and in every instance I appeared with the knowledge and consent of my superiors. In briefing with my superiors, prior to my appearances, I was instructed to cooperate with the Subcommittee, to tell the truth, and not to invoke executive privilege. I did tell the truth. In response to the Subcommittee's inquiries, I recounted facts, relating to security and administrative practices in the Department, and not my complaints or frustrations, if any. If any spleen was vented, it was done by certain of my superiors in attempts to discredit me.

OTTO F. OTEPKA.

Wheaton.